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NOTICES FROM THE LICK OBSERVATORY.*

PREPARED BY MEMBERS OF THE STAFF.

COMET SWIFT *a* 1899.

About midnight, March 3d, a telegram was received at the Lick Observatory from Dr. LEWIS SWIFT, of the Lowe Observatory, Echo Mountain, announcing his discovery of a new comet, which he described as large, very bright, and having a short tail. From my observations on the three following nights, I have computed the elements of the orbit given below. According to these elements the motion of the comet is retrograde, and in a short time its apparent place will be so near the Sun as to render observations of it impossible. After passing perihelion it will be north of the ecliptic, and its position with reference to the Earth and Sun will be such that it may readily be observed in the northern hemisphere after the early part of May. At discovery it was just visible to the naked eye, and in May its theoretical brightness will be about the same. It may be remembered, however, that shortly after perihelion passage the brightness of comets frequently exceeds that given by theory, and especially so when they have passed very near the Sun. The perihelion distance of this comet is about 32,000,000 miles. This is not a very small distance, yet is much less than the average, which for the 303 cometary apparitions of this century is about 87,000,000 miles.

At the time of my first observation of Comet Swift, it had a well-defined nucleus of about the tenth magnitude, a large coma, six or eight minutes of arc in diameter, which was very diffuse at the edges, and a slight indication of a tail. Since then the central part of the comet has changed somewhat in appearance. The nucleus is not so distinctly stellar; it appears rather as the

* Lick Astronomical Department of the University of California.

point towards which the coma increases rapidly in density and brightness. At the later observations the tail also has been more definite in form and of greater length.

ELEMENTS.

$$\begin{aligned} T &= 1899 \text{ April } 13.26427, \text{ Gr. M. T.} \\ \left. \begin{aligned} \omega &= 4^{\circ} \ 54' \ 14''.4 \\ \Omega &= 23 \quad 8 \quad 45 \ .2 \\ i &= 146 \quad 3 \quad 42 \ .6 \end{aligned} \right\} 1899.0 \\ \log q &= 9.537504. \\ \Delta\lambda' \cos \beta' &= + 3''.0 \quad \Delta\beta' = - 4''.9 \end{aligned}$$

W. J. HUSSEY.

A NEW STAR IN *SAGITTARIUS*.

From an examination of the Draper Memorial photographs, Mrs. FLEMING has discovered a new star in the constellation *Sagittarius*. Its position for 1900 is R. A. $18^h 56^m.2$; Decl. $- 13^{\circ} 18'$. It was too faint to be photographed on eighty plates taken between October 18, 1888, and October 27, 1897, although stars as faint as the fifteenth magnitude appear on some of them. It appears on eight photographs taken while it was bright. On March 8, 1898, it was of the fifth magnitude, and on April 29, 1898, of the eighth magnitude. A plate taken this morning (March 9, 1899) shows that the star is still visible, and is of the tenth magnitude. Two photographs show that its spectrum resembles those of other new stars. Fourteen bright lines are shown, six of them due to hydrogen.

The entire number of new stars discovered since 1885 is six, of which five have been found by Mrs. FLEMING.

HARVARD COLLEGE OBSERVATORY,
March 9, 1899.

E. C. PICKERING.

COMMUNICATION CONCERNING THE PUBLICATION OF AN
ANNUAL ASTRONOMICAL REPORT.

I intend to publish an "Astronomischer Jahresbericht mit Unterstützung der Astronomischen Gesellschaft" (Astronomical Yearly Report aided by the Astronomische Gesellschaft). It will give short reports of all the works on astronomy, astrophysics, and geodesy, both practical and theoretical, which have appeared